DECEMBER, 1959

Ballet TODAY

TWO SHILLINGS

ALICIA MARKOVA
IN THE DYING SWAN
FROM THE PAINTING BY CARLOTTA EDWARDS

Ballet TODAY

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE

Established 1946

THE MAGAZINE WITH THE WIDEST NEWS COVERAGE OF BALLET THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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THE NATIVITY

to be presented on Television on Christmas Day (see page 7)

THE ANGEL GABRIEL (JEROME WILLIS) THE VIRGIN MARY (PHYLLIDA LAW)

No. 10 VOL. 12

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Cover Portrait: Alicia Markova in *The Dying Swan;* acknowledgments are made to the artist **Carlotta Edwards** for permission to reproduce the painting and to **Miss D. P. Daniels** the owner of the picture whose generosity made it possible for colour blocks to be made.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE IS A COMBINED NUMBER AND WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE 14th JANUARY, 1960.

Editor's Log

WHEN I was very young no matter what trouble or disaster filled my small world I was always comforted that "tomorrow would be better."

One of the contributing factors to the unrest and despair of youth of today is this lack of faith in the shining promise of "tomorrow." Tomorrow could mean a landing on the moon, it could also mean annihilation. The dangers of living for today alone are only too apparent, we become selfish, mistrust our neighbours and view other nations with suspicion.

But every now and again there is something which releases the eternal hope in mankind, we drop the mask of indifference and respond, happy and uninhibited. During this past year I have seen this happen on a number of occasions, the most recent the visit of the Georgian State Dance Company to this country. The audience, numbering thousands, rose as one man to clap and cheer and we turned to our neighbours and said "aren't they wonderful?". It wasn't because they *were* Russians, or *in spite of* the fact that they were Russians, it could and has happened with artists of any nation, for in their art lies communication with the spirit of mankind.

Such experiences as these renew one's faith in humanity, you remember that while the physical body of man has survived incredible hazards through the ages, its survival is nothing compared with the miracle of the human soul. Beset with the lusts of the flesh, persecuted for its beliefs, great artists and people emerge in every generation and contribute something worth while.

This Christmas we have hopes that our leaders are to meet and discuss the problems of our age on an international basis. If they be inspired with the spirit of the writer, the painter, the dancer, the musician who strive towards perfection in their chosen art not for themselves alone, not for worldly gain, but because in their humility they know there is room for improvement in the work they do, then tomorrow will be better. We must all pray for that.

IT must happen to everyone, but it seems to me that the events in my column always occur two days before we go to press. By that time space is getting short, and only the briefest of notices can appear. This month I was summoned in one morning to a conference at Dame Margot Fonteyn's home; a dress rehearsal of Roland Petit's Company at the Adelphi; and invited to have a chat with Dr. Julian Braunsweg of Festival Ballet. In the same week we received short notice that the Royal Ballet film produced and directed by Dr. Paul Czinner would be given a special screening for the press.

However, I have no option but to sum up these events in my very limited space by saying that Dame Margot's conference to present some of the artists and discuss plans for her Gala at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (reported elsewhere in this issue) was, as always, great fun, and showed her tremendous enterprise in anything she undertakes.

The *Cyrano de Bergerac* dress rehearsal was chaotic but enlightening, it is always amazing to me that most things come right "on the night." (Fernau Hall will review the ballet next month.)

The talk with Dr. Braunsweg was extremely interesting. He showed me the press notices Festival Ballet had collected on its tour of Scandinavia and they certainly were morale-building for the Company. A few days later they were to appear in Stuttgart, Bologna, Trieste, Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, leaving the last named city on the 15th December and starting rehearsals the next day for their *Nutcracker* season at the Royal Festival Hall commencing 26th December.

The most important news, however, was of Festival Ballet's Central and South American tour which is to commence on the 11th March running through to 31st May next year, when the Company will appear in Mexico City, Caracas, Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. This is the first time than an entire British company will have appeared in South America. I hope that in the not too distant future the contribution Dr. Braunsweg has made to British prestige in presenting his Company abroad on these long and arduous tours will be publicly recognised. Journalists abroad express their surprise that the British press do not, as a rule, give this Company good notices. Critics, however, do not claim to represent the opinions of their countrymen, and never was there a clearer case that the opinions of the critics are not those of the general public. The Festival Ballet always receives a rapturous welcome when it returns to London, and they invariably play to full houses.

I did not find the Royal Ballet film as exciting as Dr. Czinner's "Bolshoi Ballet," but as a record of excerpts from the repertoire of the Royal Ballet, and in particular of Fonteyn's superb art, it is without doubt the most important event in the history of ballet to date. The film is in Eastman colour, and in *Ondine* the result was harmonious, but in *Firebird* and particularly *Swan Lake* the colour appeared harsh. The latter ballet, however, depending as it does on the eerie atmosphere created on stage is very difficult, in fact almost impossible, to transfer to the screen successfully. The film will be premiered and have a season at the Columbia Theatre, London as from 14th January.

News here and there . . . . . .

La Fille Mal Gardée with choreography by **Frederick Ashton** will have its first performance at the Royal Opera House on the 28th January. One of the oldest ballets in modern repertoires, it is in two acts with music by **Ferdinand Herold** arranged and orchestrated by **John Lanchbery,** and scenery and costumes by **Osbert Lancaster.**

Robert Helpmann will make a welcome return to the Garden in the role of Mother Simone, a part previously made famous by Enrico Cecchetti, and Mikhail Mordkin and also by Edward Caton with Ballet Theatre.

Anya Linden is to open this year's Russian Christmas Bazaar held annually by the Pushkin Club, on Saturday 5th December, at 4 p.m.

Joseph Vandernoot, conductor for several seasons with Ballet Rambert, is to make his Festival Hall debut on Thursday December 10th, when he conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He will also conduct all but three performances of the Roland Petit Ballet Company's season at the Adelphi.

Doris Barry, Festival Ballet's production manager (and sister of Alicia Markova) met with an accident at Malmö, Sweden when the taxi in which she was travelling to the theatre crashed into the back of another vehicle. Miss Barry was thrown against the glass partition, badly injuring her nose and face. After receiving emergency treatment in the local hospital Miss Barry decided to fly home. She is now waiting to enter hospital for an operation, but hopes to be completely recovered by the time Festival Ballet commence their London season.

Anton Dolin has almost recovered from his foot injury (reported last month), but it has caused him a great deal of inconvenience at a very busy time.

Pas de Quatre (choreography by Mr. Dolin) was in rehearsal in Paris. John Gilpin helped out by taking over, followed by Yvette Chauviré (who knows all the roles) and will dance that of "Grisi." Lycette Darsonval will dance "Taglioni," Josette Amiel "Cerrito" and Marjorie Tallchief "Grahn." The première at the Paris Opera will be December 16th. Mr. Dolin was also asked by Esmé Bulnes and the director of La Scala Milan to mount this ballet for them during December.

No definite information is available at press time regarding the proposed visit of the **Royal Ballet** to South Africa next year, but the tour will probably commence at the end of January, last for 16 weeks, and include Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town.

Norman Dixon is to present his third new ballet *Violent Rhythm* at the Sunday Ballet Club's next performance to be held at the Lyric Theatre, 13th December. The cast will include **Doreen Wells, Gary Burne, Pirmin Trecu** and **Terry Gilbert.**

Alfred Rodrigues left for Copenhagen in November to produce *Blood Wedding*, and, if there is time, a short new work, for the Royal Danish Ballet, for production towards the end of January.

The newly formed Harlequin Ballet, under the direction of **John Gregory,** opened its autumn season at the Stables Theatre, Hastings, and visited a number of coastal towns including Folkestone, Ramsgate, Bognor, Grimsby, etc. The company which is led by **Barbara Vernon,** with **Christina Coleman** (TV ballerina from Canada), has enjoyed very warm praises wherever it has gone.

The repertoire includes a delightful Harlequin Ballet specially choreographed by Madame **Tamara Karsavina,** and adapted from Drigo's *Les Millions d'Arlequin.*

The company is now preparing for spring and summer programmes.

LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

ANTIGONE

BY far the most important thing about *Antigone* (first performed at Covent Garden on 19th October) is that it gives a hint of a major change in artistic policy within the Royal Ballet. Though dramatic ballets such as *The Rake's Progress*, *The Firebird* and *Blood Wedding* have had enduring success in the public, and represent one of the major elements in the company's repertoire, this genre has been sadly neglected in recent years. Instead, we have had ballets with tepid and tenuous romantic themes—often lasting a whole evening, in spite of the weakness of the story line—and this policy has seriously unbalanced the company's repertoire, as well as holding back the development of British ballet. In *Antigone*, however, Cranko has tackled a tragic theme in a straightforward way, steering clear both of the obscure psychological gimmicks which characterised his treatment of a serious theme in *Harlequin in April* and of the sentimentality typical of *The Lady and the Fool*. The great interest aroused by *Antigone* suggests that, at least in intention, it is in tune with the contemporary Zeitgeist; and Cranko, by aiming very high, demands that one takes his ballet very seriously.

It is easy to understand why Cranko chose the story of Antigone for a ballet giving expression to this new stage in his artistic development. In ancient Greece the Sophocles play was one of the best-loved and most frequently performed tragedies, and since then a number of dramatists have made use of the same story, from Seneca right through to Anouilh. Here we have a myth of deep and enduring meaning; as society develops, artists and the public find new shades of meaning in each myth, but the archetypal core remains, saying things which can be said in no other way and helping us to come to terms with the unconscious depths of our nature. The heroine is a marvellous creation: she is in love with Haemon (in fact *Antigone* is the only Greek tragedy with what we should call a "love interest"), but she has tremendous strength of will and moral sense which cause her to maintain the eternal divine laws against the man-made and temporary law of Creon: she insists on performing the sacred burial rites for her brother Polynices, and asserts her love for him in noble poetry. Her character is marvellously contrasted with that of her sister Ismene, who is equally affectionate but counsels a prudent obedience to Creon's law. Antigone scornfully rejects Creon's angry denunciations with the magnificent line "And do you seek for anything beyond my death?"—and holds firm even though he inflicts on her the most terrible of deaths (walling up alive). Antigone's last utterances (in a dialogue with the chorus) represent some of the finest lyrical poetry ever written. This scene is a stroke of genius on the part of Sophocles, for it shows us Antigone as a human being, not just a pure embodiment of passion and will: she says farewell to the pleasant life with the husband she will never know, and thinks of the terrible journey she must take. She ends nobly by praying that Creon will not suffer worse evils than the wrongs he did her, but Creon's retribution follows with swiftly cumulative horror (typical of the final scenes of a Greek tragedy) as he finds himself responsible for the death first of his son and then of his wife.

How far have Cranko and his collaborators succeeded in finding a balletic expression of this mighty theme? First let us look at the decor, for this is magnificently successful, and gives us a standard of comparison for assessing the other elements in the ballet. Cranko showed enterprise, imagination and good taste in selecting as designer Rufino Tamayo, one of the greatest living Mexican painters: in contrast to his equally famous Mexican contemporaries, Tamayo has a very sensitive eye for colour in relation to form, as well as a flair for abstraction, and is sufficiently international in outlook (he has in fact been living in Paris for two years) to be able to cope with something as remote from Mexico as a modern interpretation of ancient Greece.

Following a line pioneered by designers working for Martha Graham (notably the Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi) Tamayo has created for *Antigone* a mysterious semi-abstract space stage; the setting gives a vague suggestion of the battlements of Thebes, but is more symbolic than realistic. There is a fascinating and novel combination of three-dimensional shapes and abstract painted scenery (with an emphasis on texture produced by stippled mixtures of shades), and stage lighting is used to change the colours of both the shapes and the flat scenery in a most imaginative way. (On two occasions, when fighting is due to start, a leaf-shape above the battlements changes from a strange yellowish gray to an acid green, while the neutral colours of a great wall, stage-right, change to a frightening mauve-violet.) In place of a cyclorama, Tamaya has designed an abstract backcloth with a complex texture in various shades of blue which is far more evocative than a simple blue cloth could ever be; with bold austerity, Tamayo avoids the temptation to change the colours on this, and so throws into relief the changes in colour on the shapes and the wall, as well as preserving continuity. This setting appears timeless to us—for it is in tune with the most advanced thinking by contemporary stage designers—and it has a quality of mystery and terror which makes it perfectly suited as setting for a Greek tragedy. To the Greeks, the drama was an essential part of religion—something to be treated very seriously—and Tamayo's setting (with its associated lighting plot, designed by William Bundy) does a great deal to create in us the awe aroused in the ancient Greeks by the poetic representation of their myths.

Unfortunately Tamayo's costumes belong to a completely different world. Here all is muddle and inconsistency. The brothers and many of the soldiers wear tights, with nothing above the waist, in a vague approximation to Minoan male dress; but one brother (Polynices) wears tights of which one leg is black and the other white, giving a suggestion of the early Italian Renaissance which is fantastically out of place in a Greek tragedy. The same can be said of the tabards of some of the men, and the Empire dresses of some of the women. On the other hand Oedipus and Jocasta wear fairly close reproductions of Greek costumes of the classical period; and, to make confusion further confounded, Antigone wears a neo-classical adaptation of balletic practice dress with a very abbreviated skirt (à la *Symphonic Variations*) in a bright red colour which carries implications very remote from her character.

We find the same muddle and lack of any consistent style when we look at the choreography. The story of Antigone provides a magnificent subject for a ballet. In fact dancing played a large role in ancient Greek tragedy: in a play dealing with the events leading up to the story of Antigone (*The Seven Against Thebes* of Aeschylus) we are told that the dancer Telestes (presumably the Leader of the Chorus) "made the audience see the things that were being done," indicating that the ancient choreography was highly expressive—and reminding us of the Greek origins of our word "choreography." But Cranko cripples himself from the start by taking a plot which is hopelessly overloaded, in fact presenting almost the whole of the myth associated with the curse on the House of Laius. Though the programme states that the ballet is "a free adaptation of Sophocles' tragedy of *Antigone*," it actually moves through 9½ scenes before reaching the Sophocles story; and this is then raced through in a mere 1½ scenes.

Advance publicity for the ballet made clear that it is based on a play by Racine rather than on Sophocles' story. In fact Racine's play *La Thébaïde* is a poor model for a one-act ballet, for it is in five acts; in any case this was Racine's first play to reach the stage, and showed his inexperience in many ways. Not content with Racine's overloaded plot, Cranko takes the story even further back to include the death of Oedipus. One can only imagine that he is reacting away from the mistake he made in *The Prince of the Pagodas* of using too tenuous a story; but his new policy is equally wrongheaded. Clearly he has not penetrated far enough into Greek literature and mythology to learn the importance of measure in all things.

A scene from John Cranko's ballet *Antigone*.

Another very unsatisfactory aspect of the Racine plot is the crude melodrama of the ending: Jocasta, Antigone and Creon all commit suicide in rapid succession. Cranko is sensible enough to cut out the latter two suicides, but he makes almost nothing of the departure of Antigone to her death—one of the great scenes in the Sophocles play—and fails to show the retribution which overtakes Creon.

Crude melodrama is in fact characteristic of much of the choreography of the ballet. So much time is occupied by fighting that in spirit the ballet is much closer to the Hollywood Western than to a Greek tragedy. The acting is equally melodramatic, and some scenes show an astonishing lack of taste—notably the scene where Jocasta hangs in mid-air, supported by her two sons. There is no consistency of style from one scene to another, or even from moment to moment within a scene, and (except in one scene) nothing suggests that Cranko did any research to help him create a style for the ballet in harmony with the theme and the period. In fact a good deal of work has been done on the dancing of ancient Greece, and it is even possible (by study of works of art, the rhythms of the choruses, etc.) to get some idea of the dancing of the choruses; moreover there are some fascinating survivals of ancient Greek dances in the chain dances of Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Roumania. But Cranko's Pyrrhic dances, for example, represent a curious mixture of a scene in *Checkmate* and Hollywood versions of Red Indian war dances. The girls all dance in flat shoes, but normally perform steps which look feeble without the full pointe; in two pas de deux with Haemon, Antigone even does perfectly conventional neo-classical supported work which is ludicrous without the balance on full pointe.

One scene—the quiet "waiting" dances of the women, with Antigone—does however show some feeling for the dance movements of Balkan countries. Here the composer provided Cranko with music in odd-numbered time signatures showing clear influences from Greek folk dances, and Cranko had the good sense to put to it patterns and steps vaguely reminiscent of Greek and Roumanian folk-dances: Cranko's rhythms have little of the subtlety of the original dance-rhythms, but the movements are reasonably in harmony with the music, and the "rightness" of the style makes a very refreshing effect; in fact Beriosova's simple lyrical dancing in this scene is easily the best thing (choreographically speaking) in the ballet.

The most serious deficiency in Cranko's adaptation of the ancient myth is to be found in his treatment of the character of Antigone. He is of course quite justified in giving a personal interpretation to this character, and it was a good idea to build up the "love interest" by stressing Antigone's relationship with Haemon in two pas de deux. But these pas de deux are so convential—they could in fact appear in almost any neo-classical ballet, if Beriosova changed into pointe shoes—that they do nothing to establish Antigone's character or feelings. Cranko suppresses the role of Ismene, so that we never see Antigone's character contrasted with that of her sister. In fact Antigone remains passive throughout the ballet: all we see is Beriosova performing simple steps in a lyrical way, as she has done so many times before. This passivity destroys the whole meaning of the story: a passive Antigone is as pointless as a single-minded Hamlet or a cool and calculating Lear. Did Cranko perhaps intend Antigone to be more positive and Beriosova lead the role in the direction of demureness? One cannot tell. At all events there is nothing in the outline of the movements to suggest that Cranko intended an Antigone more in line with the myth.

Though the male characters are not well distinguished from each other, the principal male dancers struggle gamely to give them some solidity. David Blair has some success in this difficult task, giving the kicking movements of Polynices a good deal of sullen ferocity.

The music, by Mikis Theodorakis, has the advantage of an idiom sufficiently modern to exclude anachronistic suggestions of the recent past. The composer has some real talent for lyrical melody (as in the opening pas de deux and the "waiting" dances of Scene 9). But during the first half of the ballet he infuriates one by constantly starting out to reproduce some passage or other from the Bliss music for *Checkmate* and then sheering away from it. What one misses in his music is any sense of continuity: each scene is worked on as if it were something on its own (usually with heavy pounding rhythms) and there seems to be little attempt to come to grips with the great moral and religious theme of the Sophocles tragedy—something which one would expect a Greek composer to take very seriously. It is quite typical of the way Theodorakis tackles the story that when Creon comes on to the stage to crown himself king, the orchestra welcomes him with a highly conventional drum-roll and fanfare that would do (more or less) for any king in the world: it has nothing to do with the Creon of Sophocles. The pity of it is that a talented composer with experience of ballet might well have inspired Cranko to create choreography with more expressiveness and consistency of style.

Notwithstanding the defects of *Antigone* this production has great importance because, for once, a great theme is tackled, and problems are faced instead of evaded. It is fairly easy to see what went wrong in Cranko's planning and execution of this project, and one may hope

that he and other choreographers will learn from his mistakes. It is worth remembering that all the great pioneers of the ballet d'action in the 18th century—Weaver, Sallé, Noverre and Angiolini—found inspiration in Greek myths, and this is also true of such great 20th century pioneers as Martha Graham and Antony Tudor. Since the myths present a fresh challenge to every generation, I feel sure they will continue to inspire exciting new types of ballet in the future.

MERLE PARK'S COPPELIA

Swanilda, pretending to be the doll Coppélia, was becoming tired of teasing the silly old man Dr. Coppelius : suddenly she seized some sheets from his book of magic and with one quick gesture tore them in pieces and filled the whole stage with scraps of paper. The effect was surprising, spontaneous, and magically timed—like all the rest of Merle Park's performance on 22nd October.

It is easy to imagine Léontine Beaugrand doing something like that when *Coppélia* was first produced at the Paris Opéra. She did not dance the role at the very start—as a result of various complex intrigues very characteristic of the Opéra, it was given to a very young Italian dancer—but she in fact inspired it, and every detail shows the impress of her remarkable talent and personality. She was highly intelligent and witty, with a strongly developed individuality; in her career she had to fight all the way for any sort of advancement, but she never lost heart, and when her chance came to dance Swanilda she made this role into the very embodiment of French *esprit*—a word for which there is no exact English equivalent. I recommend the story of her life to anyone interested in *Coppélia*, and above all to Merle Park herself—who might almost be regarded as a reincarnation of Beaugrand.

GEORGIAN STATE DANCE CO.

THE Georgian dancers who began a season at the Albert Hall on 9th November were not the first to appear in London. I remember seeing, before the War, a group of Georgian male dancers in a garden in Hampstead who staggered the eye with the speed of their footwork, the extraordinary combination of delicacy and power in their slender bodies, and the unique virtuosity of their dancing on pointe in soft boots without blocks. But these artists showed only one type of Georgian dance: the large group at the Albert Hall showed that Georgia has a fascinating variety of dances and costumes in its different regions—and that Georgian women have their own dances which are quite different from those of the men, with an emphasis on gentle arm movements rather than on leaps and fast footwork.

In contrast to Yugoslavia (where one finds European and Asiatic elements co-existing) Georgia shows an inextricable blend of the two which corresponds to the country's geographical position at the cross-roads of the Caucasus, on an ancient invasion route: who can say if Georgia is in Europe or in Asia? Though one may from time to time detect parallels with the dances of other countries—e.g., a flicking hand movement of a solo woman's dance *Dzheirani* which is similar to a hand-movement in a Tadzhik solo woman's dance, or a witty heel-and-toe movement similar to a step found in mountain dances of Highland Scotland and Central Spain—the dances of Georgia are always very much a thing apart, reflecting the fact that this country has preserved its national consciousness for a very long time: this year its capital Tbilisi is celebrating its 1500th anniversary. In between periods when the country was independent and was able to develop its own culture, it suffered periods of foreign occupation when the national arts such as dancing and singing provided a means of maintaing ancient traditions.

We have seen a good many national dance groups in recent years, but the Georgian programme was as good as the very best. In some respects it was outstanding: above all in the war dances. This is a country which has seen a great deal of fighting, and this may partly account for the tremendous fire of its fighting dances—above all those of the Khevsurs. Even today the Khevsur mountaineers cling to their weapons—sabre, dagger and small round shield—and they clash their sabres and shields together with such ferocity and speed one hardly dares watch for fear of an accident. At moments the stage was filled with bright sparks from the clashing sabres, and even the sound was breathtaking.

The dancing on pointe of the men grew more and more astounding as the programme went on, until in the final item—a competition dance—soloists were performing feats of almost unbelievable virtuosity. Though their boots are made of soft leather (like gloves) and have no blocks, they do things which no ballerina would consider, such as leaping high in the air from pointes and then landing on them again. There is nothing effeminate about this toe-dancing: one soon gets used to the idea that in Georgia pointe-work is strictly a male pursuit—something much too virile and powerful for women!

In no other country (except possibly Manipur) are the female dances so different from the male in style and technique. Whereas the male dancers have a considerable variety of steps, the women normally do not seem to make any steps at all, gliding along with feet pattering invisibly under the long skirts. The arms and hands have slow, gentle, sinous movements like nothing else in dancing, totally unaffected by the foot movements. (This independence of arms and legs is characteristic of both male and female Georgian dancing.) The gliding feet and stately arm movements of the women were seen to particular advantage in *Girls' Gliding Dance* and in *Simd*, a very noble and reserved Wedding Dance similar in some ways to the Polonaise of Poland.

Quite as remarkable as the virtuosity of the men and the noble grace of the women was the intelligence and good taste with which the show as a whole was planned and presented. In contrast to other groups from the Soviet Union, the Georgians showed no costumes which were not in harmony with ancient traditions and in perfect taste: in fact there was a most satisfying balance between items with coloured costumes (in subtle shades of green, grey, mauve, blue and gold) and items in the most elegant black and white. The music was strictly and wonderfully traditional, whether played on the ancient drums and an ancient reed instrument allied to the oboe, or on a combination of drums and accordion. The items were cut to just the right length for a show of this sort, admirably varied in tempo and style, and skilfully arranged to follow each other without a break. The men were almost without exception strikingly handsome in a lean and hawk-like way, wearing their moustaches with a fine swagger, while the women were all good looking (with round faces of an Indo-Persian cast) and some were devastatingly beautiful: with both men and women the combination of fair complexions and raven black hair was very attractive. All in all it was a memorable evening at the Albert Hall.

Fernau Hall.

TELEVISION

The Nativity

ON December 8th and 10th at 2.45 p.m., Associated-Rediffusion will broadcast "The Nativity" as the final programme in a series for Primary Schools entitled "The World Around Us"; a wider audience will be able to see the programme when it is repeated on Christmas Day. The Nativity programme will be of considerable importance in the development of television, for it represents a new synthesis of the arts: mime, dance, the spoken word, choral singing, instrumental music, paintings and sculpture all play their due part in the telling of the story, coming together in a way only possible on television. Litz Pisk, who is responsible for the mime and dancing, is unique among choreographers and dance-teachers in being just as much an expert in art as in mime and movement; and in fact knowledge of all three is essential for this production. The movements and poses are to a large extent based on Romanesque sculpture, having bold sculptural rhythms which are in harmony with the noble language of the Bible and suit the television screen. The story will be mimed and danced by sixteen actors with extensive training in mime and movement: in fact most of them were trained by Litz Pisk at the Old Vic Theatre School, and for this reason she is able to achieve a harmony of group movement which would otherwise be impossible. As in all good television, there will be extensive use of close-ups as well as group movements: the whole of the choreography has been planned with the placing and movement of the various cameras in mind, and it naturally has a quality very different from stage choreography.

Between the scenes of mime and dance there will be interludes in which the atmosphere is maintained and is heightened by paintings chosen from great works of Italian painters of the 14th and 15th century: Giotto, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli and others.

This is the second time Litz Pisk has worked on an Associated-Rediffusion Schools programme. Last year she appeared in a programme "Actors Must Dance" in the "Invitation to the Dance" Series, scripted by Fernau Hall, which featured her work. In "The Nativity" she is once again working with Fernau Hall, and is able to make good use of the experience gained in the earlier programme.

The director of the programme is Ian Fordyce. The Biblical text is spoken by Robert Harris, and John Churchill is responsible for the music. The script editor is Martin Worth. Ernest Hewett has designed costumes which take inspiration from Romanesque sculpture but conform to the laws of television and reflect the demands of Litz Pisk's choreography.

Another of Associated-Rediffusion's Schools programmes to include dancing will be *Music*, No. 8 in the series *The Artist in the Modern World*, to be transmitted at 3.25 p.m. on 2nd and 4th December. This will show why modern composers write in the way they do, how they get their effects, and how their methods of composition differ from those of classical composers. As this is a television programme it shows visual equivalents of much of the music played, and in several cases this takes the form of dancing. Anne Heaton makes her return to ballet in this programme, appearing in no less than three different items: an excerpt from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* arranged by Lydia Sokolova; a neo-classical pas de deux to part of Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète*, arranged by Anne Heaton herself and her partner Donald Macleary; and the final pas de deux in *Blood Wedding*, which comes as the final episode in a sequence in which Denis Aplvor explains how he built up the music of the ballet from a tone row, and how he brings out the feelings and moods of various scenes.

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**As our first number for 1960 is not published until Mid-January, we suggest that you start off your gift subscriptions with this December issue.*

PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

FESTIVAL BALLET

AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, LONDON

THE NUTCRACKER

26th December to 16th January

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

1st Dec.	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs*, *Antigone* (Beriosova, Somes), *Firebird* (Page Hynd,).
3rd ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5th ,,	Sat.	(Mat)	*Sylvia* (Beriosova, MacLeary)
9th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Antigone* (Beriosova, Somes), *Symphonic Variations* (Fonteyn, Page, Lindsay, Somes, Shaw, Trecu), *Daphnis and Chloe* (Fonteyn, Somes)
12th ,,	Sat.	(Mat)	*Coppelia* (Sibley, Usher, Cox), *Facade* Lindsay, Grant)
12th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
15th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Rinaldo and Armida, Firebird* (Linden, Hynd)
18th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
19th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair)
21st ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Rinaldo and Armida, Firebird* (Linden, Hynd)
23rd ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
26th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Cinderella* (Beriosova, Macleary)
26th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
28th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
30th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Beriosova, Macleary)
31st ,,	Thur.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Linden, Doyle)
2nd Jan.	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Linden, Blair)
5th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
6th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
9th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Cinderella* (Linden, Doyle)
9th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
12th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
14th ,,	Thur.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair)
16th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)

ROLAND PETIT'S BALLETS DE PARIS

From November 18th *Cyrano de Bergerac*
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THE TOURING COMPANY OF THE ROYAL BALLET

W/c 7th Dec.	*Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon*
,, 28th Dec.	*Granada, Woolwich*
4th-9th Jan.	*Essoldo Theatre, Brighton*
,, 11th Jan.	*De Montfort Hall, Leicester*

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c 30th Nov.	*Alhambra, Bradford*
,, 4th Jan.	*Rex Theatre, Wilmslow*

WOLFGANG BRUNNER, the author of this article, recently produced "Es Lebe Das Leben," a work best described as entertainment-ballet in a modern style, for the Basle Festival. This was the first year that professional dancers have been engaged for this purely athletic Festival, hitherto a play had been produced and performed in the main by amateurs and athletes. The Basle authorities gave it as their opinion that with the advent of television a large audience had been brought into contact with music and dance of an international type, and that live theatre and especially popular festivals must use this type of entertainment.

In this article Mr. Brunner sets out the results of this experiment.

Large scale experiment in ballet entertainment

IN arranging the entertainment programme for an Athletic Festival in Switzerland I had the opportunity to create a show which in its circumstances and size was unusual and of great interest to ballet. The traditional Festival play was to be replaced by a new kind of entertainment in which dancing and dancers played the key part.

Thirty-four dancers (19 girls and 15 men from various countries) took part. A stage 60 ft. wide and 48 ft. deep was specially built inside a huge tent, with a seating capacity of 4,500. 160 projectors, a technical staff of 50 persons for stage, lighting etc., and close on 100 extras were at my disposal as well as a composer, designer and a 60 piece orchestra.

The occasion was the Federal Athletic Festival in Basle from the 9th till 12th July which attracted 25,000 athletes from all over the country. The budget for this play ran to 190,000 Sfr. (approximately £17,000).

The Circumstances

It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to "experiment" on such a large scale in the field of entertainment designed for the masses. The following circumstances made it possible:—The aim of the entertainment committee, composed of laymen, was to have a play which could reach and interest the widest sections of the public. The Festival was to keep, as previously, a theme expressing the spirit and value of athletic activity (Switzerland has an old tradition of Festival plays created for the purpose and the meaning of such Festivals), but to produce something in a contemporary manner, using a wide range of theatre techniques as well as introducing the element of professional artists as opposed to the traditional amateur casting.

To realise such aspirations tremendous difficulties had to be overcome, set practices for the running of such Festivals had to be changed. For instance the catering committee, which controls the most important part of the revenue had to agree to a play without interval, and no service during the show (normally they serve food and drink during as well as before and after the show). Union rules and regulations for the musicians recording on tape had to be observed, the public had to be prepared with adequate propaganda in a directive and informative way about the new form of this play. When public money is made available the public demand justification for its expenditure, and with production costs rising because of the employment of professionals, artists and technicians, the economic factors become a tremendous problem.

It was a tremendous step for the responsible people of the town, represented by their committee. They took pride and courage in acting as a directive body with awareness of their cultural and progressive responsibilities in making this venture possible. And they were extremely practical in stepping up the publicity to commercial level, so that the run of the play was guaranteed from the beginning.

With these hopes and expectations I found myself with the task of creating a play, a new form with which to entertain and please what I would call an uninformed audience (but who are sometimes unfairly described as a "beer drinking" public), as well as to interest an essentially theatre-going audience. It is interesting to observe in this context, that of all branches of theatre the only ones at which these two distinct types are found together are the ballet and the musical shows. This has placed these two art forms in compromising positions, and as a result both have started to borrow from the other. The borrowing has had very good results especially in recent musicals, injecting higher intellectual values in contents and visual presentation (though it can be overdone with a theme such as *Candide* which remained "peculiar" to the ordinary man). It is however far more difficult for the ballet world to borrow from the musicals. Being fundamentally a more sensitive form of art, it is not only sensitive to the standard of the audience, but more so to the standard of the dancers.

Presentation-taste

Musicals are a straight form of theatre, ballet is not. A musical should remain straightforward in contents and develop to a higher niveau by way of presentation. In ballet we find both contents and subject of an intellectual level. For ballet to borrow from musicals can be pleasing, particularly in certain dance styles, but often we find that using themes, music, sketches, in musical-show character result in creating only bad taste in ballet.

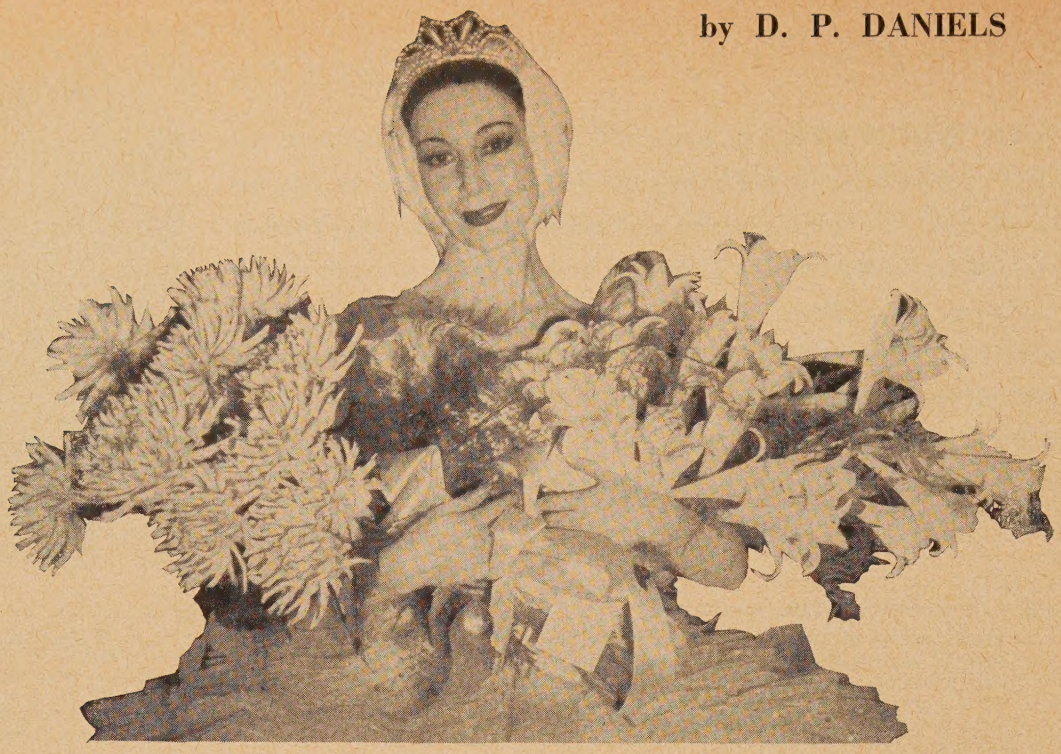
Being conscious of the dangers of borrowing, I attempted to "marry" the two, which resulted in a conception of movement, rhythm and colour, linked with story, text and song, and interpreted visually solely by dancing and mime. (Not using dancer/singers and singer/dancers.) By marrying the elements of these two theatre forms, I did not intermix them, theme or themes, music, and the use of dance and dancers are elements of both, the differing elements, ballet-treatment on the one hand and musical treatment with song and text on the other, in an alternative fashion. Provided that there is a high niveau of presentation-taste the culturally trained spectator is entertained when the theme is straightforward. In this way the ordinary man is brought subconsciously, at least, in contact with art values he would not search out for by himself. (I must remind the reader that I am talking about entertainment ballet.) With this form I was able to keep the ballet-minded and the rather discriminating public interested, for what was ballet remained in treatment balletic, whether the style be modern or classical, it provided also spectacle and entertainment in happy unison.

A simple example may help to illustrate what I mean by "presentation-taste." Take as a simple theme; a father goes with his two children from a scene in the town out into the country to discover (or enjoy) its beauty. *The subject*: dance of the flowers. *The scene*: a landscape with hills. This is straightforward and easily understood. The way which the trio makes its way from town to country can be treated strictly in the character of musicals (with song) but the balletic treatment of the flower dance would be banal and boring in this context if not injected with presentation-taste, i.e., concentrating on visual and choreographic ideas.

It will by this time have become clear to the reader that I am strongly against the well-known principle of "playing down" to the level of the ordinary man. The ordinary man can only know what he wants from what he has already seen and knows. He wants to understand the proceedings. When he has grasped that, I am sure he will not mind a surprise in the presentation. It may at first only affect his subconscious but in time it forms part of what he has seen and becomes part of his own experience. The ordinary man should not be underestimated. He is a very grateful type, sometimes for very little.

My greatest pleasure was to put this thinking into practice, making fairly high demands on the public in regard to music, dance and presentation-taste. (The show was crowned with a 20 minute Classical Symphonic ballet.) The large audiences responded enthusiastically, a large percentage probably never inside a theatre. Later statistics told us that the "beer drinking" public consumed more after the show than on other occasions, and there is nothing wrong in that!

by D. P. DANIELS



In Cuba, dancing in *Swan Lake* with the Pro Arte Ballet, Havana.

ALICIA MARKOVA

"I CAME from Nottingham to see this performance," whispered my neighbour in London's Royal Opera House, "and I would have come from China !" It was June 22nd, 1957, the last night of the Royal Ballet season that year. Alicia Markova had danced *Giselle*. Now, after a long ovation, she was to make the season's closing speech. She stepped forward from among her flowers, held up one finger for silence, and the roar of applause was hushed.

That is one glimpse of a great ballerina, typical in its way. Yet it represents but a fraction of Markova's story. She has had many triumphs in the Opera Houses of Europe and the Americas. If all the bouquets she has received could be massed together, they would make a complete flower festival ! But Markova can face also those acid tests of the ballerina—a makeshift stage, erratic lighting, two pianos. She can afford a pioneer's adventures, because everywhere she takes her own magic. Had her career been developed under the wing of one of the big State theatres, it might have been easier, more secure. But actual millions of people would have missed a treat !

I have watched Markova dance on some sixty occasions in Britain alone since the article published in *Ballet Today*, January/February* edition 1957. Yet again, this is just one facet of her story, which gleams here, there and almost everywhere.

Taking a quick backward glance, we find her, at the start of 1957, touring Belgium and Germany with the Ballet Rambert; then giving a summer season at the Royal Opera House; dancing her fabulous Taglioni role in *Pas de Quatre* at the Genoa-Nervi Ballet Festival; appearing as guest ballerina with the Pilar Lopez company in Madrid; bringing the cool radiance of the *Dying Swan* to London's Royal Command Variety Performance; delighting New York at the turn of the year with her spring-like dancing in *Orfeo* at the Metropolitan Opera House; and flying to Havana for two guest performances of *Swan Lake* with the Pro Arte Ballet of Cuba.

Early in 1958, Markova won a new opera-going public at Drury Lane Theatre, choreographing her own dances in brilliant style for the Swiss and Oriental settings of "William Tell" and "The Pearl Fishers." A long tour with Festival Ballet Company took her next to Paris, Lisbon, Marseilles, to Munich and Zurich, and for the first time, to Israel. There followed another Royal Command Variety Performance in Glasgow and a summer season at Festival Hall. That autumn, Markova danced again in New York with the American Ballet Theatre, her marvellous *Giselle* once more a great feature of this season.

**This article covered the previous two years of Markova's career to the end of* 1956. *Miss Daniels now brings the story up to date.*

Followed a special air trip to London to dance at the Gala Matinée in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing—and then Markova was winging back to New York for a big television date, to star in the Victor Borge Show. Back in London for Christmas, she sparkled through the children's holidays in a lakeside ballet in "Where the Rainbow Ends" . . . "Are those real diamonds on her dress ?," whispered one small girl among the audience. "Don't be silly !" replied her superior brother, "She wouldn't *have* unreal ones !" I have heard many an ecstatic comment at Markova's performances, but this remains a favourite.

This past year, Markova has made guest appearances with the fledgling Ballet Companies of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C.; danced another splendid season at Festival Hall; and flown *Giselle* to Dublin for the very first time—her performance, said the "Irish Times," "placed Markova unchallengeably among the immortals." In lighter vein was that summer "Night of a Hundred Stars" at the London Palladium, when she looked as dainty as a wild rose in a Taglioni solo, and then took everyone by surprise in a comedy scene with Sir Laurence Olivier and Bob Hope later in the show ! In October, Markova starred in "Gala Performance," the first of a series of British television programmes presenting famous artists.

"Stop Press" news reveals that Markova was honoured November 4th at New York's Britannia Ball, held in aid of The International Cultural Centre for Youth in Jerusalem; she appears on Canadian television December 3rd, but returns to London to dance the Sugar Plum Fairy for B.B.C. television on Christmas Day ! Her future plans include a probable visit to the Far East.

Seen in perspective, Markova's career is a pure triumph for the individual artist. One might call it a "solo flight !" Markova herself is first to acknowledge her early debt to Diaghilev and the teachers and artists surrounding him. But as everyone knows, she has come a great journey since. Through the years, her gifts have always created their own demand. Often with the very minimum of personal publicity, she has played key roles in the rise of such companies as Sadler's Wells (now the Royal Ballet) the Festival Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre and others. The fact that these companies have developed since, does not mean that her unique qualities have ever been replaced. This is why her appearances as Guest Ballerina are always so exciting. And it is largely through her work these last twenty-five years, that our modern ideal of a great ballerina has taken form.

The **New York Herald Tribune,** quick to realise that the elegant ballerina's wardrobe would be of great interest to readers, gave over practically the whole of a front page to photographs of Markova modelling some of her gowns. Here she is seen in a silk-satin ballgown designed by Scaasi. The fabric, with its toque butterfly print, was specially woven in France.
Photo by Peter Fink

LONDON

Alicia Markova at home in her Knightsbridge flat, with her cat Moey.

In November, 1958, Margot Fonteyn organised a Gala Matinée in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing. Many famous artists gave their services. When the Queen Mother and H.R.H. Princess Margaret arrived, to everybody's delight it was found that Princess Anne accompanied them. Markova is seen shaking hands with the young princess, with Princess Margaret looking on.

Markova is often likened to the ballet stars of history, to Marie Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, and to living memories of Pavlova and Spessivtzeva. As a comparison of personalities, this may be too vague, and perhaps, not desirable. But in another sense it is deeply true. For Markova has the poetic intuition to give us the treasure of the past in ways that we understand. Through her dancing, *Giselle*, the *Tyrolean* made famous by Taglioni, and Pavlova's *Dying Swan*, are literally created anew. She was schooled in the grand tradition, of course. But what we see in her is not the style of the past, so much as a reassurance that an artist can still pour out riches through the medium of ballet, can interpret life through the dance. She does not copy the old lithographs; but she naturally illuminates the whole "Ballerina Story." Through her, its great dancers are revealed to us in a measure, because she understands their source, and adds to their legacy her own gifts for today.

A true ballerina must be tough enough to sustain the life of the theatre, yet sensitive enough to keep that spiritual and emotional distinction which we expect of her. She must also keep abreast of the times. Not so long ago, the famous ballerina was a remote being, whose life off-stage reached the public only in colourful press-blurb. What ordinary ballet-goer had the chance of getting Pavlova's autograph after a performance, let alone of speaking to her ! But today the chasm separating artist and public has narrowed somewhat. Markova signs a pile of autograph books after each performance: "A rubber stamp," she explains, "Doesn't mean anything." She makes very real concessions of time and energy to speak to people who want to see her for sincere reasons, as distinct from the merely curious. And by facing this "light of common day" she loses no enchantment. Indeed, I think she gains a firmer place in the public's affection—and when we see her on stage, there are still "real diamonds" on her dress !

PARIS

In the Sarah Bernhardt dressing room receiving congratulations from Liane Daydé (star of the Paris Opera) after a performance of *Giselle*.

Photo: Michel Petit.

NEW YORK

Markova is as much at home in New York as she is in many countries throughout the world where she gives guest artist performances. In this photograph she is seen with director Rudolph Bing before the opening performance of Gluck's "Orfeo" at the Metropolitan in 1957.

Photo: Louis Mélancon

Ballet is surely the most revealing of arts. In star roles, a dancer's character is inevitably hinted, often laid bare. Markova brings to us an almost miraculous blend of polished stage experience and artless sincerity ! Though nowadays, rehearsal-time and star privileges are cut to the bone, she never reflects these difficulties in her performance. She is extremely versatile, switching brilliantly from one mood to another; and her stagecraft comes to the rescue like greased lightning in crises which may occur when dancing with a new partner or an unrehearsed orchestra. Altogether, the most professional of artists ! Yet she does not hide herself in a cloak of professional tricks. Again and again she brings us those "moments of truth" which enable artist and audience to meet face to face.

What of Markova and the ballet critics ? How realistic are they, those thousands of rave notices, sober tributes and snap judgments—all the clippings in many languages which, by now, would fill a small library ! They have their place. Yet possibly nearer the heart of the matter are certain remarks, repeated constantly among her audiences; a spontaneous chorus, showing the main trends of feeling.

Recently, more and more people exclaim how happy Markova looks while dancing; whether in the sparkle of such roles as *Bolero* 1830 or the serenity of the ballet blanc. "She has a lovely expression—it doesn't matter how near the stage you are !" This last is sometimes added incredulously, because many famous dancers are apt to fail here and look strained in close-up.

Again, words used by one young dancer a few months back, are so often echoed by members of the audience: "When you watch Markova, the music seems to come *from* her—it's amazing, but somehow she *is* the music." Her beautiful arm and hand movements, so often praised by critics, are not merely "fluid," but appear themselves as a kind of visual melody.

The unique impression of lightness which she gives, is also a favourite talking-point. Because no other dancer can match this, we somehow expect it as part of "Markova's Magic." She herself explains that this "ethereal" quality is no free gift from heaven, but the result of tremendous training and control. To the onlooker, it is as elusive as a soft breeze, and the measure of her art is that we take it for granted.

Indeed, Markova's dancing seems to have a refreshing quality all its own, which actually lifts the worries and tensions we may bring into the theatre . . . But I think her own sense of fun would respond to the homely tribute of a little girl who sat beside me at her concert in the English town of Leicester, several years ago. After the finale, the *Nutcracker* Pas de Deux, with Milorad Miskovitch partnering, the child sighed: "If only I could be like her and do that lovely pink dance, I'd—I'd"—she searched for words, then added surprisingly: "I'd live entirely on lettuce for the rest of my days." This would not be Markova's own recipe for aspiring dancers!

No space remains to tell of Markova's public engagements apart from dancing, of new ventures added year by year; for instance, her role as Commère of Ballet Music for the B.B.C. Light Music Festival these last two summers. She is a charming, natural speaker with a rich knowledge of ballet music, and leaves us eager to hear more . . . Talking of public engagements, most people know that Markova was made a Commander of the British Empire at New Year, 1958.

Markova is always enlarging and extending her public. And no wonder! Art that wings the world's barriers is most precious today. May 1960 prove a Golden Year for all she has to give.

ISRAEL

Markova pays a visit to the "cash desk" whilst appearing with Festival Ballet in Tel Aviv. On Markova's left is Oleg Briansky, and (right) Mary Duchesne, Marilyn Burr, Louis Godfrey, Jean Pierre-Alban and Diane Westerman.

Photo: Isaac Berez.

Barbara Bittnerowna and Witold Gruca, leading dancers of the Polish Ballet, who made their first appearance in London at the Gala Matinée in Chopin's Nocturne. *Photo:* Tadeusz Kubiak

HARALD LANDER'S QARRTSILUNI is to be presented in Paris during December, and our photograph shows him preparing the ballet at the Opera. With him are grands sujets Mlle. Serval, Garry, Bassi and Bianchi. Other ballets to be performed during December will include Anton Dolin's *Pas de Quatre*, *Les Sylphides*, a revival of the ballet *Chemin de Lumière* and a new ballet *Un Conte Cruel*.
Photo: Daniel Fallot

BACK

THE HIGHLIGHT of the ballet month during November was the Gala Matinée organised by Dame Margot Fonteyn and held at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on November 26th in the presence of H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent and H.R.H. Princess Alexandra.

The programme under the direction of Frederick Ashton, C.B.E., included artists from the three major British companies, The Royal Ballet, London's Festival Ballet and Ballet Rambert; excerpts by members of the cast from Jerome Robbins' London production of *West Side Story;* two French companies—the Ballets de Jean Babilée and Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit; and two members of the Polish Ballet—Barbara Bittnerowna and Witold Gruca.

Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes appeared twice during the afternoon—in the world première of Frederick Ashton's pas de deux with story and music from Glazunov's *Raymonda*, costumes by Leslie Hurry—and in the pas de deux from *Casse Noisette*.

Jean Babilée, Claire Sombert and Gerard Ohn danced in *Balance à Trois*, never before seen in London, and Lucette Aldous from Ballet Rambert appeared in an excerpt from John Cranko's new ballet *La Reja*.

The Gala was held in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing, and scholars of the Academy appeared in a ballet by Meriel Evans. The Pro Arte Orchestra was under the direction of John Lanchbery.

ROLAND PETIT'S Ballets de Paris now presenting *Cyrano de Bergerac* in London, last appeared here in 1956. For this season the Company came straight from Paris after giving a second season in response to popular demand. The full-length ballet is in eight scenes and is based on Edmond Rostand's immortal work, with music by Marius Constant, decor by Basarte and costumes by Yves Saint Laurent of the House of Dior. Choreography is by Roland Petit, who also plays the

STAGE

THERE IS ONE STORY that the world never tires of hearing, the local girl who makes good, the singer discovered in a waterfront café, the ballet dancer who becomes an "overnight sensation." Well it happened to Antoinette Sibley of the Royal Ballet, after she took over the role of Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake* because Nadia Nerina was ill with bronchitis. There were sensational notices in the national Press on the day following the performance. She appeared in a news item on TV; and danced in the "Sunday Night at the Palladium" show with Michael Somes. All within one week.

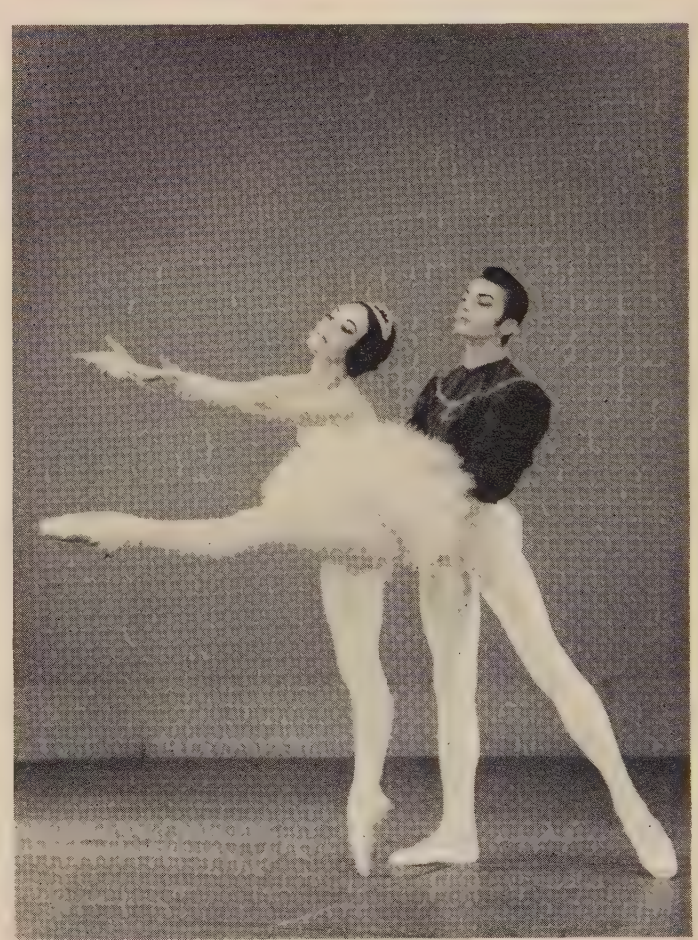
But, of course, in ballet it does not really happen just like this. The big "break" comes sometimes, but years of hard work have preceded it, years of hard work lie ahead, in fact, until their ballet shoes are put aside for ever, for unlike other careers in which overnight "discoveries" are made, there is no easy road to success in ballet, dancers can only come up one road—the hard way.

Photo right: Antoinette Sibley in her dressing room on the night of her performance in Swan Lake.

BELINDA WRIGHT seen below in a new photograph with Jelko Yuresha, will be appearing with Festival Ballet as a guest artist during their Christmas season in London.

In the Gala Matinée at Drury Lane Miss Wright danced with John Gilpin in the *Harlequinade* pas de deux.

Photo: Erich Natter



title role. In Paris the role of Roxane was created by Roland Petit's wife, Zizi Jeanmaire, but was later taken over by Tessa Beaumont enabling Jeanmaire to star in the operetta "Patron" by Marcel Aymé, with choreography by Roland Petit. In London, Colette Marchand dances the role of Roxane. The Company gave an excerpt from *Cyrano de Bergerac*, "the Dance of the Musketeers," when they appeared at the Gala performance.

Photo: Studio Bernard

JOHN GILPIN

In choosing JOHN GILPIN *as the male dancer in his opinion to have made the greatest contribution to ballet during the past year,* ANTON DOLIN *said that this brilliant young dancer had worked hard for the past ten years, given his services to ballet, never created difficulties . . . .*

JANET SINCLAIR

who has known John Gilpin for the past fifteen years tells in this pen portrait of the dancer exactly how hard he did work, even at the age of fourteen, and pays tribute to the mature artist of today

With Janet Sinclair in 1948, the young John Gilpin at the beginning of his career.

WHEN I first met John Gilpin fifteen years ago, he was that most precocious of all things, a child actor; but a child actor without precociousness. He had at the time achieved quite a success in films, and this would go to the heads of most children. It did not go to John's. This was, of course, because to succeed as an actor was not really very important to him. John wanted to be a dancer.

Muriel and Sydney Box were filming "The Years Between" during the latter part of the war and my mother was in charge of the clothes for the production. The unit was on location, which meant that I was left alone in our London flat, so I was invited down for a couple of weekends. I stayed with my mother in the large, rambling guest-house where all the cast save the most exalted were quartered, and to me the most interesting of the cast was a small boy called John Gilpin. John was fourteen at the time, and during every moment when he was not eating, sleeping or in front of the camera he was practising pirouettes en dedans. I can see him now, a rather short, chunky small boy with already all the gentle charm which has since endeared him to ballet audiences, pirouetting, pirouetting, pirouetting. We used to talk ballet for hours, and I tried to "sell" him the idea of joining Ballets Jooss, which in those days provided magnificent opportunities to male dancers, but he was politely unconvinced and went on practising the pirouettes of classical ballet.

Once the film was completed, I lost sight of John, and next heard of him a couple of years later when he came to the fore in Ballet Rambert. He was with Rambert for five years, years which included the long Australian tour; next joined the Ballets de Paris, went on to the company of the Marquis de Cuevas, and finally in 1950 joined the company with which he has been associated ever since: Festival Ballet. Indeed, he has become equated with this company in much the way in which Royal Ballet means Fonteyn, Bolshoi means Ulanova and Ballet Theatre Nora Kaye: a unique position for a male dancer and one to which the only parallel in this century is that of the Diaghilev Ballet, which to the majority of early audiences equalled Nijinsky.

I said earlier in this article that John's successful film career had not turned his head. His success in ballet—and he is looked on abroad, and often at home as well, as England's finest premier danseur—has not turned his head either, and whether one meets him on holiday in Devon catching netfuls of shrimps for tea on the beach with two little girls, children of a family friend, or walking through the after-

ON TOUR

Despite his phenomenal success, John Gilpin remains completely natural and unspoilt. Our cameraman caught him giving an impromptu performance in the Piazza del Duono Milan, egged on by members of Festival Ballet, whilst on tour in Italy. In the photograph below he is seen coming to the aid of ballerina Marilyn Burr.

Both photos by Gianfranco Moroldo.

show crowd in Floral Street, he remains entirely natural and friendly and never in the slightest degree "gives himself airs," despite the fact that he has partnered most of the greatest dancers of the day and danced leading roles in a greater variety of ballets than almost any contemporary English male dancer.

Gilpin is at his best ideally in such a ballet as Harald Lander's *Etudes*. *Etudes* narrowly escapes being a perfect ballet; if it were cut by ten minutes it would rank with the finest examples of abstract ballets, and it is certainly head and shoulders above most "classroom" works. However, few would disagree with the suggestion that it gives perfect opportunity to Gilpin's particular virtues as a dancer, which are extraordinary lightness, smoothness and evenness of movement; though this evenness is never allowed to become monotony, since Gilpin has a strong rhythmic sense and an unusual appreciation of the value of contrasted movement in dancing. In fact, technically his work is such a very great pleasure to watch that those responsible for choreography and casting have tended to give him pure dancing roles to excess: though Balanchine devotees will disagree, many people still believe that dancing must express something besides dancing and that the dancer who only dances will sooner or later end by becoming a bore. This slight but ever-present danger, in no way the responsibility of Gilpin himself, was dispelled when Jack Carter cast him as the Witch Boy. This role can in many ways be regarded as the peak of Gilpin's career to date, and it is strange to remember that, although it is now permanently associated with John Gilpin, it was in fact created with other dancers in mind.

The Witch Boy—incidentally, the first outstanding ballet, with *Billy the Kid*, named for a male instead of a female character since *Petrouchka*—was first performed by the now extinct Ballet der Lage Landen in Amsterdam on 21st May, 1956, when the role of the Witch Boy was created by Norman MacDowell, who also designed the costumes. In many ways, the original Dutch presentation was superior to the English: understandably, for when a small, struggling company finds itself with a masterpiece on its hands it puts everything it has into the attempt. The Dutch performance was perhaps not so finished technically, but it was danced with an inspiration and a singleness of purpose which the more experienced, English, slightly more blasé, Festival Ballet dancers could not bring to it. However, the most interesting comparison can be made between the two dancers who have performed the title role. Shortly after the Dutch première, I was talking to Carter about the ballet, and he said "I wanted to do this ballet to illustrate the idea that you can't kill evil. You may crush it but it always springs up again." Thinking subsequently about this parable-ballet, I became aware of the paradox that one can regard it in two ways: either as the choreographer meant it, or as a parable of good:—that ignorant, primitive people will try to crush the new and beautiful, but that what is progressive, new and different in human nature will always be reborn. The difference between these two angles of approach is almost exactly the difference between the performances of MacDowell and Gilpin. MacDowell was a strange, pagan animus, one of Jung's "primordial figures of the unconscious," yet with a spark of feeling borrowed from Barbara Allen which aroused one's sympathy. Gilpin plays the Witch Boy as a new-born soul struggling to transcend the inhumanity of his origin, and this makes his interpretation far more sympathetic, if less dominating, than that of the role's creator. However, given the paradox inherent in the parable, one interpretation is as valid as the other, and few could fail to feel personally involved in the tragedy of the Witch Boy as performed by either interpreter.

To some extent, Gilpin has been affected by the general tone of patronage now fashionable when writing about Festival Ballet, presumably because the company does not want to instruct, educate or bore its audience but merely entertains it. In fact, it is regarded as "non-U" and by reflection Gilpin is robbed of some of the prestige which is by right his. It is understandable that this patronising attitude in the press should annoy Anton Dolin, who after all has done more than most for English dancers and English ballet quite without official recognition of any kind: however, it need not worry John Gilpin—not, that is, so long as he has good hearing. Audiences all over the world show their warm, personal appreciation in no uncertain terms. John Gilpin is one of the very few English male dancers who has continued steadily to improve through the years, instead of beginning with a flash and a bang and never afterwards living up to first promise: he has come a very, very long way from that earnest small boy, eternally practising pirouettes en dedans, on film location.

The following members of Festival Ballet have been featured in our *Careers in Pictures* and *Men in Ballet* series:—

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Belinda Wright, Dec. 1956	1	6	John Gilpin, Feb. 1958 ..	1	6
Marilyn Burr, July 1957 ..	1	6	Anita Landa, July 1958 ..	1	6
Louis Godfrey, July 1957	1	6	Michael Hogan, Sept. 1958	1	6
Keith Beckett, Oct. 1957..	1	6	Jeannette Minty, Feb. 1959	2	0

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Opening of the Annual Opera Ball

THE VIENNA STAATSOPER

Photo: Franz Hausmann

Vienna

by Trudy Goth

THE enjoyment of the Viennese for dancing has a tradition which goes back a long time. Since baroque times Viennese have danced at the court, in palaces, in public ballrooms, casinos and gardens, and as everyone enjoyed equally watching others dance, there was much interest in ballet performances, too. Dancing then was the domain of the Italians, like the opera, but even more so. At the time the wife of David Garrick—a Viennese by the name of Eva Maria Veigl and the only one of her nation to be buried in Westminster Abbey, next to her husband—went out into the world as a dancer and changed her name to Violetta. Even Fanny Elssler, Vienna's greatest and most famous dancer of all times, became such mainly because of her many years of training in Naples.

Towards the end of the 18th century ballet was so popular in Vienna that at the Burgtheater there was a ballet to be seen nearly every day of the week. One of the more successful ones was more of a pantomime and a tragic one, given as an attempt (in 1762) to vary the usual fare of showy court-ballets. It was called *Don Juan* and composed by Cristoph Willibad Gluck and one of the performances was watched by a young man who was deeply impressed by it—his name was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Vienna's passion for dancing outlasted Baroque and their beloved Biedermeier, survived the revolution of 1848 and reached its prime in the 1880's when the then ballet master and premier danseur, Joseph Hassreiter together with the composer Joseph Bayer created the *Fairy Doll* which is still one of the most frequently scheduled ballets in the Austrian and German repertoire. In the 20th century the Wiesenthal sisters—famous for their youth, beauty and interpretation of the Viennese valses—outlasted the havoc caused by the first world war and the Viennese opera ballet became the creation of two Munich residents, ballet master Heinrich Kroeller and composer Richard Strauss. *The Legend of Joseph*, reminiscent somewhat of the plush court ballets of bygone days, became a Viennese specialty as did *Schlagobers* (whipped cream).

Still and again the Viennese and many of the foreign tourists who visit the city each year watch and enjoy the ballet performances at the opera house—and here we must remember gratefully the name of Erika Hanka who had a great and important part in reorganising corps de ballet, soloists, school and repertoire after World War II and whose sudden and untimely death was a great loss to all those who had the ballet in Vienna and the continuation of its tradition at heart. Many are the new ballets to her credit and not only the names of Stravinsky and Prokofiev became part of the new repertoire but also those of the youngest generation of Austrian and German composers such as Boris Blacher, Carl Orff, Werner Egk, Theodore Berger and Gottfried von Einem. The new crop of dancers are names to be remembered, for Édeltraut Brexner, Dietlinde Klemisch and Christl Zimmerl, as well as Karl Musil, Richard Adama and Willy Dirtl can be matched and compared to many of the international stars seen all over the Western Hemisphere. The actual ballet master and chief choreographer is the Macedonian, Dimitrije Parlic who got his very thorough training in Belgrade where he held for several years the post he now has in Vienna. His first contact with the international dance world came when the Marquis de Cuevas invited him to stage some ballets for his company in Paris. These ballets were well enough liked in Vienna during a guest appearance the Marquis' company gave at the opera house, for Parlic to be offered the coveted post he has held now for a little over a year, and he has proved that the confidence shown in him by the management has been justified. No doubt in the future Parlic will make even better use of his position in shaping the policy of the ballet, its programming, casting, costuming and training—something that at this moment still appears to be a little casual and haphazard. But he is a choreographer of great talent and versatility, a man completely dedicated to his work and the challenge it offers. The performances of the ballet evenings are gratifying and in keeping with the enjoyment, pride and tradition Vienna shows for ballet and the art of dancing in general.

The first all-ballet evening of this season comprised three works of which two were perhaps too much on the light side to make a perfectly balanced programme. But the sold-out house enjoyed and appreciated every single ballet and throughout the evening the dancing was disciplined but spirited, well rehearsed and stage-craft-wise perfectly co-ordinated.

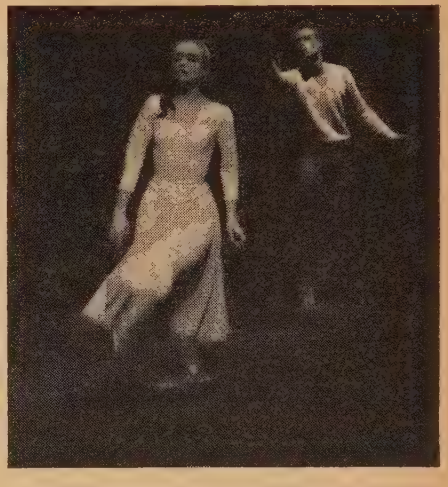
Dreams with music by Benjamin Britten is a *Theme and Variations* kind of ballet effectively presented by a device of gauze curtains behind which nightmarish evil spirits flicker and the shifting of them gives the illusion of a glimpse into the unknown. It was well danced by Karl Musil as the young dreamer and Lisl Templ as the girl he dreams about and finally holds dead in his arms while awakening. Interesting also was the part of Richard Novotny as a Lamp seeming to hang in the dusk without body.

Combat to music by Rafaello de Banfield is a work which has made the rounds of various international ballet companies. In this edition it seems to be presented with more care and understanding than previously seen, although the dancing of Melissa Hayden as Clorinda in the New York City Ballet is unmatched anywhere else (the story takes after the Torquato Tasso poem "Jerusalem liberated.") Here the part was danced by the company's prima ballerina Édeltraut Brexner who is an all round versatile dancer and technically satisfying. Richard Adama was excellent as Tancred and it is most gratifying to see how much this dancer has improved artistically and how much he has matured since—as the only American—he became a soloist with the Vienna Opera Ballet. This work was especially noteworthy for its costuming by Dusan Ristic but it is a pity that the company gives a whole evening of three different ballets of the same designer.

The closing work of the evening was *La Reine des Iles*, a three-act affair to the undistinguished music of Maurice Thiriet and equally undistinguished story about Pauline Bonaparte on a tropical island with much display of sailors, coloured maids, savages and French ladies who had much opportunity for pas de deux, pas de trois, solos and group dances—all done very well. But the work itself belongs more in a music hall than in an opera house, though the dancing of Willy Dirtl as the chief of the rebellious savages and Christl Zimmerl's Pauline Bonaparte were the outstanding impressions of the whole evening. Both these artists could match themselves with any of the international stars, and deserve to be as well known.

It is to be hoped that the company can follow its plans to have more guest appearances in some of the European Festivals, and that it become wider and better known for its undoubted terpsichorean merits.

Christl Zimmerl as Pauline Bonaparte in Parlic's new ballet *La Reine des Iles*. *Photo: Atelier Dietrich.*



Karl Musil and Lisl Temple in *Dreams*. *Photo: Fayer.*

Next month our BALLET AROUND THE WORLD series will feature THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA

AMSTERDAM

THE first ballet of the season on September 7th, was at the same time the first performance of a new ballet company. "Het Nederlands Dans Theater," was formed last spring under the direction of Benjamin Harkarvy, former ballet-master of "Het Nederlands Ballet."

After barely one month's rehearsal its sixteen dancers presented a programme which included a ballet by their director Harkarvy, new works of two of Holland's most important choreographers Rudi van Danzig and Hans van Manen and a revival of the latter's *Feestgericht*, which belonged to the repertoire of the now demised "Ballet der Nederlandse Opera."

Curtain-riser was Van Danzig's *Giovinezza* (Youth), inspired by a poem of Lorenzo di Medici and Vivaldi's *Madrigaleco*. A plotless ballet with decor and costumes (Tour van Schaaik) in the style of Botticelli's paintings and performed by two couples (Marianne Hilarides—Jaap Flier, and Milly Gramberg—Rudi van Danzig) and a small corps of six girls. A very slight dramatic touch flows through the ballet in the same sort of way it does in Taras' *Design for Strings*. The first mentioned couple also danced the leads in van Manen's *De Maan en de Trapeze* (The Moon and the Trapeze) on Britten's Diversions for the left hand, a nostalgic pas de deux of the forever dreaming clown and his dream-picture the moon, descending from the heavens. Decor and costumes were by Franz Deckwitz.

The third new ballet *Four Times Six* by Benjamin Harkarvy on music by Walter Mourant and costumes by Jack Prince is a light, gay work in the style of the jazzy modern American musicals and it got a very lively performance from the six dancers.

Completing the programme, Marianne Hilarides and Martin Schepers dance the *Don Quichotte* pas de deux.

The evening was striking for the enthusiasm with which the dancers presented each number; an enthusiasm that conquered the full house that gave them an ovation at the end.

It was a nerve-racking evening, for apart from being the first performance, the house was filled with former colleagues and many officials. After the curtain had come down for the last time, the departing audience could hear the cheers and applause backstage given by the dancers to their director, choreographers and each other; they had "made it."

On September 23rd, a renewed "Nederlands Ballet" (this year again under direction of Sonia Gaskell) gave its first performance. Renewed, because it had lost practically all its soloists and many of its younger dancers to "Het Nederlands Dans Theatre." The main interest of the programme was the presentation of the newly promoted younger dancers and the introduction of American ballet-master Karel Shook, American dancers Robert Morrow and Billy Wilson and the return of Australian Joan Cadzow as regular guest artist.

The programme had one new work, *Jazz Nocturne* by Karel Shook. A playful ballet for Sonja van Beers and Billy Wilson which combines jazz and classical dancing. Costumes are by Ger Frenzen and music by Alex Philipsen.

Joan Cadzow and Robert Morrow danced the *Don Quichotte* pas de deux and the leading parts in *Les Sylphides*. The programme was completed by *Les Forains* (Petit) and *Les Presages* (Massine).

Continued at foot of next column

Amsterdam continued from previous column

On September 20th Serge Lifar arrived in Holland to produce three of his works for the "Nederlands Ballet": *Suite en Blanc, Romeo and Juiliette* and *Mirages*.

In the meantime the newly formed "Amsterdam Ballet" under direction of Mascha ter Weeme (a rather forced combination of the former Ballet der Lage Landen and the Opera Ballet) started working after many troubles on September 1st.

Its 54 members worked very hard indeed to get ready for their first performance on November 4th.

Michael Holmes returned to Holland to revive his *Pallisades* and *Les Sylphides* (both of which he produced for the Ballet der Lage Landen in 1957). Another visitor is Leith Lester, who will do *Pas de Quatre* for them and assistant-director Alan Carter is rehearsing his *House of Shadows* (done before in Munich) and a new work *Variations on a Theme*.

INE RIETSTAP

SOVIET NEWS **From Nina Karasyova in Moscow**

The Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre of Moscow featured three one-act ballet productions last year—Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* (choreography by V. Burmeister, libretto by N. Volkov); Spadaveccia's *Shores of Happiness* (choreography by V. Burmeister and Kurilov, libretto by P. Abolimov), and *Straussiana* (choreography and libretto by V. Burmeister, P. Markov and M. Andrianov). The main roles were performed by V. Bovt, E. Vlasova, M. Liepa, A. Klein, M. Redina and Y. Kuznetsov.

During the Azerbaijan Festival of Literature and Art in Moscow the Akhundov Opera and Ballet Theatre showed three national ballet productions on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre: *Seven Beauties* by Kara-Karayev (libretto I. Idayatzade, Y. Slonimsky and S. Rakhman, choreography P. Gusev, decor and costumes V. Dorrer); *The Maiden's Tower* by A. Badalabeili (libretto A. Badalbeili, choreography G. Almaszade, decor and costumes E. Almaszade, brother of the chief ballet master of the theatre) and *Gyulshen* by S. Gadjibekov (libretto by G. Almaszade and P. Abolimov, choreography G. Almaszade, decor and costumes E. Almaszade).

The libretto for *Seven Beauties* was based on the poems of Nizami.

...A Vizier orders his servant to kill his young Khan and usurp his throne. The servant only manages to wound the Khan and forgets his master's cape by the side of the unconscious Khan. A peasant girl, Aisha, and her brother find the Khan and save his life. Taking him for a hunter, they offer him the shelter of their house and the warmth of their friendship. The young Khan falls in love with Aisha, and vows eternal friendship with her brother. He lives among the simple folk, sharing their joys and sorrow. But one day Aisha's brother shows him the Vizier's cape and the angered Khan wishes to take revenge on the Vizier. To save his skin the latter kills the servant who wounded the Khan. The Khan forgives the Vizier, returns to his palace and becomes a cruel ruler. Aisha begs him to return to her and to the people, and offers him the clothes of a plain peasant, but he no longer loves her, and in a fit of anger slays her. The people turn against him and banish him from their country.

The Maiden's Tower is based on a folk legend about the Maiden's Tower still standing on the coast of the Caspian Sea in Baku ...Khan Djangir cannot forgive his wife for giving birth to a daughter instead of the son he wanted, and orders the child to be murdered and its mother exiled to slavery. Touched by the mother's grief, his Vizier helps her to escape with her child.

Seventeen years later the little Gyulyanak is a lovely maiden. She is betrothed to the young peasant Polad. Just as they are to be married, Djangir appears on the scene. He is enamoured of the girl and has Polad flung into prison. To save her lover, Gyulyanak agrees to marry the Khan if he builds her a tower on the seashore. The Khan sets the date for their wedding.

On their wedding day, Gyulyanak's wet nurse tells Djangir that Gyulyanak is his daughter. Angered, he kills the nurse. The shocked guests desert him. Polad, who has meanwhile escaped from prison, goes to the palace and kills the Khan. Then he rushes to the tower, but Gyulyanak, thinking that Djangir had come for her, throws herself into the sea . . .

The third ballet, *Gyulshen*, tells about the builders and cotton-pickers of present Azerbaijan. It was awarded a Stalin Prize.

The ballet is the youngest form of art in Azerbaijan, but it already boasts its soloists, ballet masters, stage designers and composers. The republic has a fine ballet school of its own as well.

Twenty years ago the Akhundov Opera and Ballet Theatre did not have a single ballet production and now its repertory includes Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker*, Adam's *Giselle*, Glazunov's *Raymonda*, Minkus' *Don Quixote* and a *Chopiniana* suite.

Gamzar Almaszade, chief ballet master of the theatre, and a graduate of the Leningrad Ballet School, is Azerbaijan's prima ballerina. She was the first Gyulyanak in *The Maiden's Tower*, the role which was written especially for her.

Gamer Almaszade has done a great deal towards promoting Azerbaijan's national ballet productions. It was she who created them by merging the great traditions of the Russian classical ballet with the rich treasures of Azerbaijan dance lore.

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SAN FRANCISCO

SAN FRANCISCO'S 1959–60 ballet season began, not with a performance by one of the city's two resident companies, but with a special "Ballet Gala" featuring seven of the area's dancers: Jocelyn Vollmar, Janet Sassoon, Adriano Vitale, Roderick Drew, Fiona Fuerstner, Jeffry Hobart and Michael Smuin.

Like many similar occasions, this Gala consisted of divertissements. Among them were familiar selections from Petipa classics, a silly *Romeo and Juliet* (Ruby Asquith—Tchaikovsky) with awkward "Soviet style" lifts, and much too brief excerpts from *Das Tor* (Tatjana Gsovsky—Hartig) and *Signale* (Gsovsky—Klebe) which seemed completely meaningless out of context.

The evening's most engaging item was a delicious little *Pas de Trois* (Lew Christensen—Auber). Mr. Christensen, the San Francisco Ballet's artistic director, has been greatly influenced by Balanchine, but his work contains a mixture of elegance and tongue-in-cheek which is all his own.

Among the performers, Janet Sassoon's abilities as a dramatic ballerina could not be judged from the Gsovsky excerpts, but she danced a jolly *Don Quixote* pas de deux with Adriano Vitale. Jocelyn Vollmar, after a stiff *Swan Lake* adagio, danced the *Black Swan* with ease. Roderick Drew, although somewhat boyish at present, shows signs that he may grow into a gallant cavalier.

The city's oldest ballet company, the San Francisco Ballet, serves as opera-ballet for the San Francisco Opera during the autumn opera season and gives independent performances of its own repertoire during the rest of the year.

This season, it presented a new ballet as half of a double bill with Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The ballet, *Danses Concertantes* (Lew Christensen—Stravinsky) was a great success. A prologue takes place before a theatre. Here, the dancers promenade and engage in flirtations. Then the scene changes to the stage of the theatre where they do a set of variations, alternately acting as performers and audience. In these variations, Christensen has successfully managed to devise abstract comic movements unrelated to a plot line.

The choreography's only flaw is that the prologue is too specific and localised for an abstraction. It leads the audience to expect, not pure dancing, but a story, to follow.

Also during the opera season, the company danced in the cantata-ballet, *Carmina Burana*. But Ghita Hager's choreography was often as banal as Orff's self-consciously primitive music.

San Francisco's youngest company, the Bay Area Ballet, begins its third season this November. In October, it held a public rehearsal and meeting at which its directors, Carolyn Parks, Leona Norman and Vern Nerden, outlined plans for the coming year. These include new works, performances throughout the San Francisco Bay area, and opera-ballet with the Cosmopolitan Opera.

The first touring group to visit here was Inbal (Dance Theatre of Israel). In addition to dance, the company employs speech and song. Its subjects include folk dances, ceremonials, and biblical narratives. That the result is not a hodgepodge is a tribute to the skill of Sara Levi-Tanai, the director, who has admirably synthesised various theatrical forms into a unified whole.

JACK ANDERSON

JOHANNESBURG

ON Saturday, October 24th, despite the worst possible conditions for ballet (a completely flat auditorium and trouble with the equipment reproducing the recorded music) the Frank Staff Ballet Company gave a first-class evening of ballet—some of it outstanding.

With the exception of *Peter and the Wolf*, all the ballets performed were new ones by Frank Staff, and it is interesting to note that this company, in the four years of its existence, has produced no less than 20 new ballets.

Ballade which opened the programme, was an abstract ballet in the romantic style. The enchanting Faure music and sylvan setting by Saxon Lucas immediately set the mood, and the dancing was of a consistently high standard. Outstanding was the delightful pas de deux danced by Rosalind Kaye and Dries Reyneke. Cleverly, Jacqueline St. Clere had costumed Rosalind Kaye in all-over green tights, and this, apart from being an attractive contrast with the classical long tutus of the other dancers, served to enhance her lovely line.

Looking amazingly like Cyd Charisse with her striking dark beauty and lovely figure and legs, Joan Rochelle danced brilliantly with Frank Staff in the title roles of *Frankie and Johnny*. This was modern ballet at its best, and included a stunning pas de deux which rivalled the famous one of Roland Petit and Renée Jeanmaire in *Carmen*. Brief though it is, this ballet is a most effective and vital addition to the Company's repertoire.

Also an outstanding success was *Swan of Tuonela*. The story as shown in the programme is that Tuonela, the Hell of Finnish mythology, is surrounded by a large river with black waters, on which the Swan of Tuonela floats as Guardian. Lemminkainen the Hunter appears and is cast under a spell by the beauty of the Swan. Rosalind Kaye danced this role in a glittering black tutu, and made of Frank Staff's imaginative choreography a thing of real beauty. She has exceptionally fine arms (almost Russian in their flexibility) and uses them with wonderful effect and fluidity—so much so that one wonders if Frank Staff created this role particularly with her in mind.

The ballet *Lizzie Borden*, to music by Morton Gould, was perhaps less successful. This told in dramatic and vivid style, the story of the events leading up to Lizzie's death on the scaffold (artistic licence being used here, as in actual fact, Lizzie was acquitted). In spite of Rosemary Harvey's superb study of Lizzie, passing speedily from childhood to maturity, and including a moving portrayal of the dementia which preceded the murders, and also excellent subsidiary performances in almost all the roles, this ballet somehow did not quite come off. It had some wonderful moments, however, and particular mention must be made of the lyrically tender pas de deux between Lizzie's mother and father (Joan Rochelle and Frank Staff) before the mother's death set off the chain of events culminating in the murders. Also outstanding was Dries Reyneke's character study of a lecherous Minister.

The programme concluded with the ever-popular *Peter and the Wolf*, which was excellently performed. Somehow this ballet never seems to lose its freshness and Jacqueline St. Clere as Peter and Arlene Swift as the Duck were especially good.

The whole evening proved that Frank Staff's choreographic gifts are at the peak of

Continued at foot of next column

PARIS

THE Parisian dance season was opened at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées by the Indian dancer, Mrinalini Sarabhai and her company. The success of the company was striking—particularly after the disappointing performances of Indian companies last season at the Théâtre des Nations. Mme. Sarabhai shows us an art which is authentically India. While holding strictly to the Bharata Natyam style as taught her by her masters, she undertakes daring experiments. In certain of her ballets, for example, one finds a mixture of the feminine Bharata Natyam style with the Kathakali style which is almost always confined to male dancers. Her leading male dancer, Chatunni Panicker, stands out as much by the perfection of his leaps as by his stage presence. The male dancers Ramakrishna and Muralihadaran are excellent, while Rupanda, Minaldevi and Darshini are three highly trained Bombay danseuses; they have, in fact, been studying dancing since the age of six years.

The costumes are beautiful and in very good taste. A purely Indian orchestra accompanies the dancers. The three ballets have subjects taken from religion and mythology; there are no items representing local colour or folk-dances.

Luisillo and his Spanish dance theatre followed the Indians at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. Part of the programme was carried forward from the previous season, but this time the items were presented in a purified form, without any faults of taste, and accordingly pleased all the more. The scene which takes place at Saragossa on the feast-day of the Virgin of Pilar ended with a Jota in which priests and choir-boys took part; here was a gay frenzy which was at the same time well disciplined and good theatre. As always, Luisillo was a leaping wild beast, full of dynamic vigour expressed in rhythms of breathtaking speed. His show has perhaps lost a little of its spontaneity, and has become even a little austere; but that is not a defect, in fact, it represents a gain in artistic value. The items are well constructed, and the company includes some fine young artists; among them Vittoria Salcedo (the leading danseuse) and Josefa Ibarz, a gipsy danseuse whose beauty, dynamism and rhythmic precision are impressive. Luisillo, thin as ever, with his face burning with passion for his art, remains one of the most attractive figures in contemporary Spanish dancing.

M. A.-M. Julien, Administrator of the Théâtres Lyriques de France, has put Serge Lifar in charge of the dancing side of the Théâtre des Nations. In the meantime, Serge Lifar is finishing the writing of his memoirs, which he calls "My Thirty Years at the Opera," and which are likely, it seems, to create quite a scandal.

FERDINAND REYNA

JOHANNESBURG *Continued*

their strength. It is a strange facet of the South African character that people in this country either cannot, or will not, grant recognition to South African artists living here. Only when a South African has made good and settled in Europe will his countrymen grant him the honour that is his due. This is a pity, for Frank Staff and his company are something of which every South African should be proud, and Frank Staff's personal status as a choreographer is the equivalent of the best in the world today.

MARY KENWOOD

BLACK'S NEW BALLET BOOKS

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The Ballet Annual 1960

Edited by ARNOLD L. HASKELL

Every edition of the Annual is complete in itself. This issue is bigger and better than ever. The contributors include NADIA NERINA, MARY CLARKE, ELSA BRUNELLESCHI, IVOR GUEST, MAURICE TASSART (with a controversial article on Lifar) and there are all the usual features. As its innumerable patrons now expect, the illustrations are an outstanding feature and include almost one hundred magnificent photographs by the leading ballet photographers of today. 30*s. net.*

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The last date for entries is 29th February, 1960. All envelopes will remain sealed until March 1st, 1960. Ten guineas' worth of books will be awarded to the sender of the first correct entry to be opened, five guineas' worth to the senders of the second and third correct entries to be opened and two guineas' worth to the senders of the next four correct entries to be opened. In addition a copy of *Great Ballerinas of Today* will be awarded to the senders of the next twenty correct entries.

The Editor's decision is final and he cannot enter into any correspondence about the competition. Entries cannot be accepted from employees of the publishers, printers or binders of the book or their families. The results will be announced in the April issues of *Ballet Today, The Dancing Times, Dance and Dancers.*

Lido's Ballet No. 9

Serge Lido's annual albums of photographs improve every year. Printed in France, by first-class photogravure, the latest volume provides a superb record of ballet activity in France and elsewhere. The emphasis this year is on leading world ballerinas and composers for the ballet. 45*s. net.*

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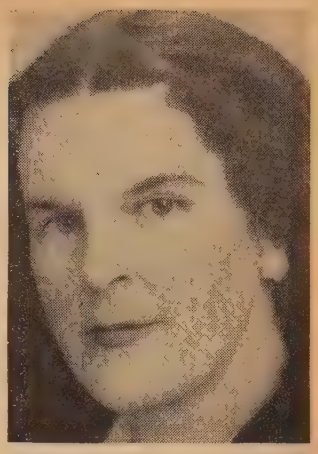


Miss Crowle is herself the author of many best sellers and her monthly reviews in Ballet Today *are an accurate and unbiased guide to the year's publications.*

The list printed in our left-hand column shows books published in this country and the date of the issue containing each review, so that you can refer to it before making your choice of books for Christmas presents.

BOOKS REVIEWED DURING 1959

FEBRUARY EDITION

Svetlana Beriosova. By A. H. Franks. (*Burke*, 25*s.*)

Russian Ballet Master. Ed. Lilian Moore. (*A. & C. Black*, 21*s.*)

Adeline Genée. By Ivor Guest. (*A. & C. Black*, 35*s.*)

Baron's Ballet Finale. (*Collins*, £2 2*s.*)

The Decca Book of Ballet. Ed. David Drew. (*Muller*, £3 3*s.*)

Rowena Jackson & Phillip Chatfield: Dancers of Today Series. By Cyril Swinson. (*A. & C. Black*, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

The Royal Ballet in Performance. By John Hart. (*Faber*, 36*s.*)

The Royal Ballet To-day. By Cyril Swinson. (*A. & C. Black*, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

MARCH EDITION

Ballet Music. By Roger Fiske. (*Harrap*, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

The Three Graces. By Serge Lifar. Translated by Gerald Hopkins. (*Cassell*, 21*s.*)

APRIL EDITION

Drina Dances in Exile. By Jean Estoril. (*Hodder and Stoughton*, 10*s.* 6*d.*)

JUNE EDITION

And Promenade Home. By Agnes de Mille. (*Hamish Hamilton*, 25*s.*)

Ballet School of the Bolshoi Theatre. (*Central Books*, 3*s.* 6*d.*)

JULY EDITION

Nikitina. By Alice Nikitina. (*Wingate*, 21*s.*)

A Dictionary of Modern Ballet. Ed. by Gadan & Maillard. (*Methuen*, 36*s.*)

SEPTEMBER EDITION

Entertainment in Russia. By Faubion Bowers. (*Nelson*, 42*s.*)

NOVEMBER EDITION

A Colour Book of Ballet. Introduction by Arnold Haskell. (*Batsford* 12*s.* 6*d.*)

New Book received too late for review in this issue:

Dress Rehearsal By Lorna Hill. (*Evans Bros., 10s. 6d.*)

THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

The Story of Theatre. By J. B. Priestley. (*Rathbone Books*, 18*s.* 6*d.*)

The theatre is the magical place where man meets his own image, and it has existed in various forms for two and half thousand years. Mr. Priestley, famous writer and playwright, captures some of this magic in this book as he traces its long history and discourses on the art of the actor and playwright. He also shows how necessary is the living theatre to the cinema, television, and radio, so that in spite of the competition of camera, microphone, and tape recorder, it must always endure.

Ballet is not touched on and there is only a passing reference to mime and the masque, but anyone interested in the theatre will enjoy this book, if only for the large and varied number of illustrations it contains. These are quite fascinating and are well reproduced, mostly in colour, and taken from paintings, engravings, sculptures and photographs. The overall format and layout are similar to that of the popular weekly journals: that is to say, gaudy rather than neat. But this is the modern trend in the book world and the public seems to like it.

Drina Dances in Italy. By Jean Estoril. (*Hodder & Stoughton*, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

In this sequel the story is continued of a young and gifted student on her way through ballet school. She returns to school in London and meets old friends as well as those not so friendly, while an exciting holiday in Italy brings her the chance of appearing in a ballet company. Such is the background of a story that is never over-romanticised or exaggerated, the various episodes arise naturally and logically but do not lack colour or variety, while the characters are well-drawn. I am sure younger readers will enjoy this book.

Ballet Stories for Young People. By Gladys Davidson. (*Cassell*, 12*s.* 6*d.*)

I am afraid young people may feel mystified rather than enlightened when they next visit the ballet after reading some of these stories—for the initiated there are many pages of hilarious reading so incredible are the author's ideas of what is happening on the stage and so complete her misunderstanding of the true significance of what lies behind the action.

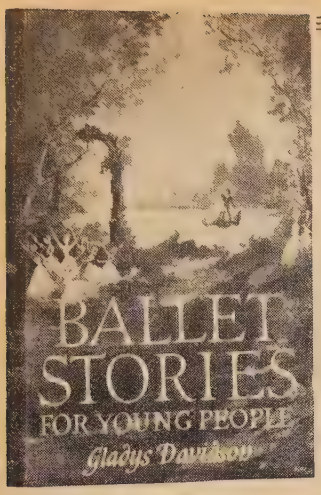
I cannot forbear quoting. This example from *Carnaval* is also illustrative of the style. Surprisingly enough, Columbine makes her first appearance soon after the rise of the curtain:

> "Dancing in on the tips of her toes, very saucily kicking up her well-shaped legs as high as they would go—as though to defy the most disapproving Victorian ladies and gentlemen, who had quickly returned, and were quite shocked at the sight of her extremely short tarlatan skirts cut to just above her pretty knees. She *must* be a hussy! they declared. But the dainty Columbine did not mind what these prudish ladies thought of her pretty frock, whether somewhat short or not, for she knew quite well that she looked charming as she pirouetted back saucily to the ballroom."

But the gem of the collection is the description of the Firebird that haunts the Tree with the Golden Apple and wantonly pecks at the fruit:—

> The Firebird "flitted hither and thither, among the trees in the glade, rather like a maiden teasing her sweetheart by playing hide-and-seek with him. Probably she had, indeed, given her feathered mate the slip in the forest beyond, leaving him disconsolate while she played truant from his side in this mysterious glade."

At the end of the ballet, you will be glad to hear, the Firebird flies away to "the beloved mate she so often enjoyed teasing by playing hide-and-seek with him."



BALLET STORIES for Young People

GLADYS DAVIDSON has written this fascinating book to make the early stages of ballet-going easier for those new to it, by telling them the story beforehand, thus giving them more time to appreciate the dancing, music, and settings of the ballets they may see. Twenty-seven stories from the best-known ballets to be seen in this country are presented here, with short notes on their histories and on their choreographers. They range from the grand romantic ballets of the last century, to the new ballets, like *The Prince of the Pagodas* and *Ondine*.

Illustrated, 12/6 *net*.

A CASSELL BOOK

The Art of Making Dances. By Doris Humphreys. (*Black*, 38*s*.)

As a pioneer of modern dance, Doris Humphreys has greatly influenced the younger school of American dancers to whom she was both an inspiration and a practical teacher. She was a pupil of Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis, and as a choreographer she is known in this country by her work for the José Limon Company.

Frail, but of unquenchable spirit, she died last year and this book is her autobiography in art, an account of her experience, her theories and their practice, illustrated by a number of diagrams.

Ballet 9. By Serge Lido. (*Black*, 45*s*.)

Each year Mr. Lido gives a slightly different slant to his superb collection of photographs. No. 9 which has some ravishing studies of heads and contains very few out-of-door poses but many more on stage or in studio, also includes a charming series of dancers seen backstage or at home. The range is wide, from London and Paris to India and the Philippines and, as usual, one is full of praise for the reproduction in all its graduation from velvety black to lustrous white, but the English translation of Mr. Julien's excellent foreword is quite fantastic.

Ballet Annual 14. *Ed. Arnold L. Haskell.* (*Black*, £1 10*s*. 0*d*.)

The year, on the whole, has been unexciting, and this is reflected in the pages of the Annual. There is the usual survey of events in England but, apart from Miss Manchester's account of the Bolshoi Ballet's visit to New York, news of ballet in other countries is represented by a check list of important new works—useful but dull. And, generally speaking, the articles by various well-known writers do not sufficiently compensate for this feeling of lack of enterprise. Here, at least, we might have had something more imaginative and original in subject and outlook. Still, if the mixture lacks spice, it contains a number of plums and one of these is the discussion on tape recorder between Mr. Haskell and Miss Clarke on that vexed and perennial question: Is ballet on the wane? Mr. Guest again lifts the curtain on the past to show us the Russians that came to London before Diaghilev, Miss Brunelleschi has some very pertinent remarks on Spanish dancing, while Mr. Fernau Hall's authoritative article on the various styles of Indian dancing seen here since the war will have a special interest for readers of this magazine. But the plum I most enjoyed was presented by the Sugar Plum Fairy herself—Nadia Nerina on certain aspects of the classical technique as experienced and exploited by the dancer. There are about 100 excellent photographs by leading ballet photographers.

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RECORDINGS

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SLEEPING BEAUTY

What an attractive present the Decca recording, LXT5532-4, would be to receive on Christmas morning ! Ansermet conducts the Suisse Romande and while in *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia* he lacked tension, here he gives a splendid performance. There are some oddly fast tempi in the Prologue—probably the result of trying to get it all on to three discs—otherwise I have nothing but praise, and it is complete, save for items 18, 22d and 27a. If your purse cannot run to this, there is the single disc, GGL0020, in the Pye Golden Guinea series. Ruggeberg's rendering has not Ansermet's sensitivity, is more full blooded, and needs some top cut.

BERYL GREY ON BALLET

We all know what a first class speaker Miss Grey is and listening to this little 7-inch record, Jupiter Recordings JEPOOC7, one felt her warm and friendly personality as strongly as across the footlights. She talks of her career, the fabulous opportunities of her early years, her approach to a role, her love for her art and her welcome to the challenge that the future holds. I am sure this disc will find its way into the homes of all her many admirers. The recording is excellent, apart from surface noise from the last few grooves of my test pressing—this should not be so on production copies. I understand this starts a series. The poem from which Ivor Guest quotes in his sleeve note was actually written in 1952 expressly for Miss Pigeon Crowle's book, *Beryl Grey*.

FROM VIENNA

Vienna ! What a gay and romantic city and what lilting, sparkling music it has produced ! The first two discs, Columbia 33SX1157 and 1167 are conducted by Henry Krips with real feeling, lilt and life. The first side, Omtar Nussio's suite, Folclore d'Engadine, is pleasing and picturesque, but it is Schönherr's arrangement of Tänze und Bauermusi aus Osterreich on the reverse that I found intriguing. The second disc is devoted mainly to Johann Strauss' lesser known contemporaries whom he so overshadowed. But hear them on this record and you will realize how effectively they can dance on their own feet ! Finally, a selection of less often heard Johann and Josef Strauss' waltzes and polkas, Decca LXT5535, which the V.P.O. under Boskovsky, plays with such obvious zest and enjoyment. Certainly the last two discs would be assets at any Christmas party.

To help you in the difficult task of choosing presents, the following can also be recommended: Dorati's performance of *Graduation Ball* (he was the arranger of Strauss' music for David Lichine) and *Gaîté Parisienne*, Mercury MMA11038; *Daphnis et Chloë*, Decca LXT5536, with the L.S.O. and Covent Garden Chorus in fine form under Monteux, who conducted its first night for Diaghilev; Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin's beautiful rendering of the difficult Beethoven Kreutzer Sonata and the gay Spring Sonata, HMV. ALP1739, the latter fitting perfectly Jooss' *Company at the Manor;* Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (Fokine's *Les Elfes*) on Decca LXT5453 with Campoli, who so engagingly expresses the Romantic Period, is coupled with Bruch's little heard *Scottish Fantasia*; Lympany's performance of *Symphonic Variations* (Franck-Ashton), HMV. CLP1288, is satisfying even if a little on the straight side, which applies also to the Schumann's *Piano Concerto*; finally Glinka's *Jota Aragonesa*, HMV. 7ER5153—Efrem Kurtz has its temper very well indeed. A happy Christmas.

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The sleeve notes are by Ivor Guest.

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star of Diaghilev's Russian Ballet and herself an exponent of the Russian method, has set the questions in Section B in such a way that they are comprehensible to students of all methods.

SECTION A

Questions: (1) Name four choreographers who have succeeded as opera producers
(2) and one opera which they have produced.
(3) What well-known orchestral conductor danced in Diaghilev's production of *The Sleeping Princess* under the name of Lukine?
(4) Name five ballets with cats in them.

SECTION B

Questions: Begin with the right foot, *sur le cou-de-pied* and the left leg *en demi-plié*.
Spring sideways to the right off the left foot, stretching the left leg beneath one and the right to the side.
Finish in the same position one began.
(1) Is this step considered to be adagio or allegro ?
(2) What is the step called ?
Begin in fifth position *en demi-plié*, right foot in front.
Shoot both feet out to second position *sur les pointes*. Close the feet in fifth position *en demi-plié* with the left foot in front.
(3) Is this step considered to be adagio or allegro?
(4) What is the step called?

PRIZES

In SECTION A for December Quiz

For the first nine correct solutions opened on Dec. 28th, 1959

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The Competition will run for three months. Part One appears in this issue, Part Two in our Jan./Feb. combined number to be published on 14th January, 1960, and Part Three in March.
You can enter in either Section A or B or both, for any single month or all three. Those entering for all three will be eligible for additional cash prizes to be awarded when the competition closes.

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I attach answers to questions in

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(3).....
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